

The Planning Process

No two planning processes are exactly alike. It is with this recognition that the following process is described. Each neighborhood that moves through the basic elements of the planning process will do so in its own unique way. In order to give guidance and keep the planning effort on track, we have developed the following overview.

Phase I Self-Evaluation

The first step in the process will be to do a full self-evaluation of the neighborhood. The self-evaluation will assist the neighborhood in framing the issues that they wish to address.

In the initial meeting, the Citizen Planning Team will discuss the neighborhood profile provided by the City in the Neighborhood Toolkit. The Team will have their own “data” to add to this profile, as they ARE the neighborhood. Any additional data gathering and investigation can be assigned to Team members as they see fit.

In addition, the Citizen Planning Team and other neighborhood members will brainstorm about the neighborhood’s strengths, concerns and issues that should be addressed in the planning process. Initially, this should be a purely brainstorming activity. The Chairperson and the Recorder will work as together to facilitate this process.

This phase will identify specific issues in the community that can be addressed in this plan or future plans. If major new topic areas arise, other than those already built into the planning process, then they can be added as topics to address (see Goal Setting). It will also feed into the next phase, *Visioning and Goal Setting*.

Phase II Visioning and Goal Setting

In this phase, the Citizen Planning Team with their neighbors will define what it is that they want their neighborhood to be. Building on that overall “vision” the Citizen Planning Team will establish the goals that the neighborhood needs to set for itself to make the vision a reality. First, the team will formulate a very brief statement that tells what the community wants to be, called the Vision Statement. Then, the Citizen Planning team can begin to set goals in each of the topic areas:

- Infrastructure
- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Recreation
- Housing
- Environmental Concerns

- Other areas as Identified in the Self-evaluation Phase

These specific goals will be a basis for the Action Plan in Phase III. It should be noted that within the goal setting process there will be specific actions that will come up. These should be recorded and listed for use in the action plan phase, but not dwelled on when creating goals.

Phase III Developing an Action Plan

Once the Citizen Planning team has a set of preliminary goals, they can move on to creating an action plan to enable the community to meet these goals. During the process, the goals will most likely be altered. This is a natural part of the planning process, and should be encouraged as more thought is given to each of the topic areas.

Now the team will go back to each of the topics and begin to fill in the actions that they believe will achieve the goal. This is where it will be useful to have an “expert” at the meeting. These experts will be City staff (Neighborhood Liaisons) from a variety of City Departments and/or local professionals that may want to volunteer their time. The planning staff will work with the Chairpersons to bring in these experts at the Phase III meetings so that the neighborhood can have the best information possible.

Once actions are identified, the team should identify the “who” and “how” of each action proposed. Again, this should be done with the assistance of City staff. In addition, the committee should prioritize the actions, recognizing the limited resources of the City and other parties that might be identified for funding projects.

Phase IV Adoption

Once the neighborhood has completed the Plan, the Citizen Planning Team will work with the City’s planning staff to submit the plan to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will consider the plan, and if necessary work with the neighborhood to amend the plan. The initial presentation and public hearing will be at a regular meeting of the Commission. The Commission will either accept the plan as it is, or schedule a work session with the planning staff and the Citizen Planning Team. It is the Planning Commission’s role to ensure that the Neighborhood Plans fit within the context of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. If the Plan recommends changes that require City Council approval, such as changes in zoning, the Planning Commission will forward the Plan to the City Council for formal adoption.

Phase V Implementation

Implementation of the prioritized projects is crucial to the success of the planning process. This is

the goal toward the neighborhood has worked for throughout, and what they expect at the end of such an effort. However, each project will have its own set of implementation issues.

Capital Projects Some of the identified projects will be infrastructure that the neighborhood needs. The City will be able to fund some of these projects through a Neighborhood Fund. However, some projects may be too costly for this fund. These projects would have to be funded through other sources such as the City's Capital Improvements Plan or grant funds.

Regulatory Projects Some of the recommended actions will be regulatory in nature, such as amending the zoning or other codes for the neighborhood. The Citizen Planning Team will continue to work with the City staff to carry out these projects.

Neighborhood-driven Projects Other action items may include such neighborhood driven projects such as identifying a GreenScape Project or organizing an annual community social event. These are projects that the neighborhood itself must implement, and thus are only limited by the resources and energy of the neighborhood.